

Message Text

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SUBJ: GUARDIAN EDITORIAL ON BAHAMAS FISHING ZONE

REF: (A) NASSAU 1732 (B) STATE 211373

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. TEXT OF NASSAU GUARDIAN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "PROTECT OUR FISHING" APPEARING IN MORNING EDITION OF AUGUST 19 FOLLOWS:
EACH STATE HAS THE RIGHT TO PROTECT ITS RESOURCES FOR THE USE OF ITS PEOPLE. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THERE WAS AN OPEN IMMIGRATION POLICY WITH RESPECT TO EVERY NATION IN THE WORLD, BUT AS COUNTRIES BECAME MORE CROWDED IT BECAME NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT IMMIGRATION POLICIES TO RESTRICT PERSONS FROM COMING INTO COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THE ONES TO WHICH THEY BELONGED UNLESS THEY WERE PERSONS WHO COULD ASSIST WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRIES. ADDITIONALLY, THERE WAS A TIME, SOME DECADES AGO, WHEN CERTAIN AREAS OF LAND IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES AND THE PRODUCE OF THE SEAS WERE OPEN TO ANY PERSON OR PERSONS WHO WERE SUFFICIENTLY INTERESTED AND COMPETENT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE RESOURCES THEREIN. HOWEVER, AS THE WORLD BECAME MORE CONFIDENTIAL

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POPULATED AND AS THE SEAS BECAME MORE DEPOPULATED, AS THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPLOITING RESOURCES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THEMSELVES AND THEIR PEOPLE, CERTAIN LAWS WERE PASSED BY MOST COUNTRIES RESTRICTING THE USE OF LAND AND THE BENEFITS OF THE RESOURCES OF THE SEAS FOR THE PEOPLE OF THESE COUNTRIES. THIS IS NOT SOMETHING WHICH HAS ONLY BEEN DONE BY SOME COUNTRIES, BUT HAS BEEN DONE BY

PRACTICALLY EVERY COUNTRY OF THE WORLD. AS A RESULT THERE HAVE BEEN SKIRMISHES IN MANY AREAS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF MANY COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN USING LAND AND SEA AREAS OF OTHER COUNTRIES FOR MANY YEARS, AND HAD BECOME CONVINCED THAT THEY WERE ENTITLED TO THE USE THEREOF. THE UNITED NATIONS HAD RECOGNIZED THE VALIDITY OF THE MOVE TO PROTECT A COUNTRY'S RESOURCES, AND HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SPEARHEADING DISCUSSIONS AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE MEMBER NATIONS WITH A VIEW TO LIMITING THE PROBLEMS WHICH COULD ARISE. THE SEA HAS BEEN A MAJOR PROBLEM BECAUSE IT IS MORE FREQUENT THAT PERSONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BE FISHING IN WATERS WHICH 'BELONG' TO COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THEIRS. CONSEQUENTLY, THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN HOLDING LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCES WHICH HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO SET OUT THE VARIOUS LAWS WHICH SHOULD APPLY TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE SEA WITH REFERENCE TO THE COUNTRIES WHICH ARE BOUNDED BY IT. THE BAHAMAS, AS AN ISLAND NATION, HAS BEEN EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCES, AND INDEED IN FINDING WAYS OF PRESERVING THE RESOURCES OF THE SEA FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE BAHAMAS. TO THIS END REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN ATTENDING VARIOUS CONFERENCES AND LAWS HAVE BEEN PASSED WHICH HAVE THE EFFECT OF PROTECTING THE FISHING ZONE AROUND THE ISLANDS AGAINST THEIR USE FOR FISHING BY FISHERMEN FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. TRADITIONALLY THE WATERS SURROUNDING THE BAHAMAS HAVE BEEN SHARED BY THE CUBANS IN THE SOUTH AND FISHERMEN BASED IN FLORIDA IN THE NORTH. NOW THAT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CUBANS BASED IN FLORIDA THESE PER-
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SONS HAVE BEEN AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SEEKING THE LUCRATIVE CRAWFISH IN 'BAHAMIAN WATERS.' THESE FISHERMEN WERE MADE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT IT IS ILLEGAL TO FISH IN THE WATERS WHICH ARE WITHIN THE FISHING ZONE OF THE BAHAMAS AND WHICH ZONE IS COMPUTED AS BEING NINE MILES FROM THE THREE MILE TERRITORIAL BOUNDARY. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS THAT THEY INTEND TO CONTINUE FISHING IN THE BAHAMIAN EXCLUSIVE ZONE. THEY HAVE BEEN WARNED AGAINST DOING THIS ILLEGAL ACT, BUT THE REPLY HAS BEEN THAT THE ILLEGAL ACTS WILL CONTINUE BECAUSE IT IS NECESSARY FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD. THERE HAS BEEN A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF RESENTMENT CAUSED BY THE ACTIONS OF THESE 'FOREIGN FISHERMEN' ON THE PART OF THE BAHAMIAN FISHERMEN AND THERE HAS BEEN RESENTMENT AGAINST THE BAHAMIAN GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT IT HAS TRIED TO PROTECT THE BAHAMIAN WATERS FOR ITS PEOPLE. THE FISHERMEN IN MIAMI WHO ARE COMPLAINING SO BITTERLY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT ARE WELL AWARE THAT THE BAHAMAS IS DOING NOTHING WHICH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES ARE NOT DOING FOR THEIR NATIONALS. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVELY PROTECTING ITS FISHING ZONE IN THE NORTH NEAR CANADA, AND IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT FINES METED OUT IN THE BAHAMAS ARE LOW COMPARED TO THOSE IMPOSED ON PERSONS INFRINGING THE U.S.

FISHERIES LAW. HOWEVER, IN AN ATTEMPT TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION IN THE FLORIDA AREA, WHICH CAN BECOME EXPLOSIVE, IT IS INCUMBENT UPON THE BAHAMIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO ENTER INTO DIALOGUE AND TO EDUCATE BOTH SIDES ON THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS INVOLVED. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE VALID POSITION OF THE BAHAMAS BE PLACED BEFORE THE FISHERMEN AND THE OTHER PERSONS IN THE FLORIDA AREA SO THAT THEY WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO ASSESS THE SITUATION IN ITS TRUE PERSPECTIVE. ADDITIONALLY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO DISCOURAGE THE ILLEGAL ACTS WHICH EMANATE FROM THAT COUNTRY. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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2. COMMENT: I WISH TO CALL TO DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION THAT
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THE THRUST OF POLITICALLY CONSERVATIVE AND BASICALLY NON-POLITICAL NASSAU GUARDIAN'S EDITORIAL IS THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD TAKE STEPS TO 'DEFUSE AN EXPLOSIVE SITUATION.' IN THIS REGARD IT IS SIMILAR TO THE IMPORT OF THE MIAMI HERALD'S EDITORIAL ON THIS SITUATION APPEARING AUGUST 15. I SUPPORT THE MEASURE CITED IN REF (B) CONCERNING A U.S. COAST GUARD NOTICE TO MARINERS AS A POSITIVE USG STEP TO DISCOURAGE CUBAN-AMERICAN FISHERMEN FROM RETURNING ILLEGALLY TO BAHAMIAN WATERS AND THUS FURTHER DEFUSING THIS SITUATION. END

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